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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

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To: The Deputy Secretary
Through: P - David Newsom
From: ARA - Terence A. Todman
Subject: Your Meeting with Argentine Ambassador
Aja Espil at 4:00 p.m. - Friday May 19th.

PARTICIPANTS

United States

The Deputy Secretary
P - David Newsom
ARA - Frank McNeil
Stefanie Van Reigersberg
(interpreter)

ARA/ECA - James Bumpus
(note taker)

Argentina

Ambassador Aja Espil

KEY ISSUES

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: DONNA M DIPAULO
DATE/CASE ID: 23 JUN 2009 200807230

1. Bilateral Relations

U.S. Objective: We wish to reiterate our hope that Argentina will announce its intention to ratify the Treaty of Flotololco at the SSOD, and convey a sense of urgency that human rights progress take place to arrest the decline in our security relations.

Argentine Objective:

To demonstrate that Argentina has made real progress in the human rights area and the United States has not responded as favorably as might have been expected. The United States should recognize the improvements already made and approve some arms transfers.

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ESSENTIAL FACTORS

Human rights and security relations are the principal items on the agenda but we wish to take advantage of this opportunity to encourage the announcement of Argentine ratification of the Tlatelolco Treaty at the SSOD.

The Argentine Ambassador has told Assistant Secretary Todman that he wished to speak to you about the U.S. attitude toward the human rights situation in Argentina. The Ambassador believes our misunderstanding of the situation has led to the decision to hold back on military transfers. He is concerned that our policy may force the Argentine Armed Forces to seek other suppliers.

The Ambassador may mention that President Videla has recently stated that the war against terrorism has been won and that the rule of law must be restored. He may also discuss Interior Minister Harguindeguy's instructions to the police to return to regular detention procedures.

Notwithstanding the positive comments of the Argentine officials we still receive reports of continuing disappearances. The Argentine government has also moved slowly on the trial or release of some 3300 prisoners held without charges. Because of these difficulties, the United States has not been able to approve arms transfers to Argentina for some time.

Under Secretary Newsom will travel to Argentina on May 22 to discuss the questions of human rights and arms sales. He will meet with President Videla to impress on him our concern over the strains placed on our countries relations, offering to take action on arms transfers if substantial progress is made in the area of human rights.

We are also concerned about Argentina's reported opposition to a visit proposed by the OAS Inter American Commission on Human Rights.

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POINTS TO BE MADE

-- We very much hope that further progress on human rights will enable us to take favorable action on your pending arms requests. If you take steps toward the normalization of detention procedures, you will find us ready to respond positively.

-- You might, for example, wish to invite the Inter-American Human Rights Commission to Argentina to demonstrate the progress you are making.

-- Argentine's stance on the Commission at the upcoming OAS General Assembly will be important evidence of Argentina's commitment to the advancement of human rights in this hemisphere.

-- We are delighted to have this opportunity to see you on the eve of the Special Session on Disarmament and the Under Secretary's visit to Argentina.

-- I know you have worked actively to help bring about a nuclear free zone, in Latin America, which we hope will come very close to fruition by the actions of your Foreign Minister at the Special Session as well as anticipated actions by the Soviet Union and France.

-- I also know you are concerned about the state of our relations. Under Secretary Newson's visit is evidence of our own very serious concern.

-- We recognize that Argentina has taken a number of steps to restore the rule of law. We, in turn, have changed our voting in the international banks, moving from no votes to abstentions.

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